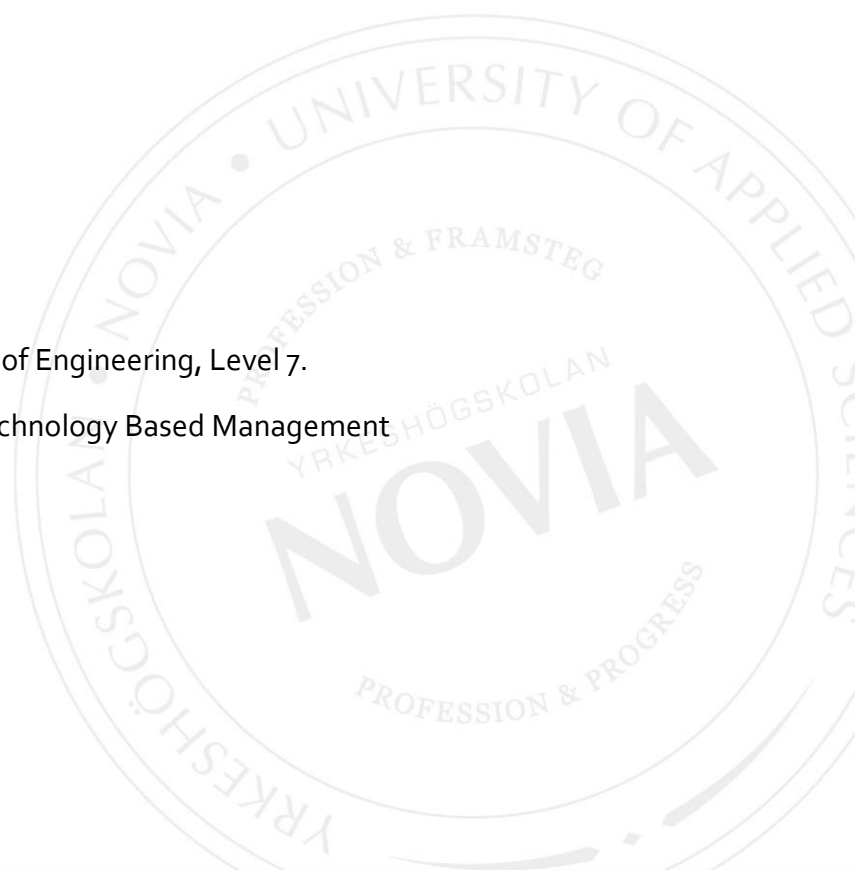


Organizing Volunteers and TEDxVasa

Degree Thesis for Master of Engineering, Level 7.

Degree Programme in Technology Based Management

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MASTERS'S THESIS

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Summary

Creating any type of event will incur a lot of tasks and scheduling, if the event is large or long this list of tasks will be event longer. An Event format like TEDx poses its own challenges as all work is done voluntary without any kind of payment or reward for any party.

Managing volunteers is one of the key factors in getting the work done but can also be a great source of ideas and valuable insights if done correctly. Poor leadership on a common or personal level can lead to disruptions within the group that can threaten the whole project.

This master's thesis is done on behalf of TEDxVasa samordnare rf. A legal entity consisting of a group of volunteers who have come together for the sole purpose to host TEDx events.

Language: English Keywords: Volunteers, TEDx, Management

EXAMENSARBETE

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Abstract

Skapande av vilket typ av evenemang som helst innebär en stor del uppgifter och planerande. Om evenemanget är längre eller har ett stort antal deltagare så ökar kraven på bra planering och ledning. Evenemangsformatet TEDx medför sina egna utmaningar eftersom allt arbete är på ideell basis varvid ingen får någon ersättning i form av lön eller annan belöning.

Ledandet av frivilligarbete är en av huvudfaktorerna för att få det nödvändiga jobbet gjort men kan även vara en rik källa för idéer och olika infallsvinklar till problemlösning. Dåligt ledarskap på personligt eller allmänt plan kan leda till splittringar eller avbrott och kan riskera genomförande av hela projektet.

Detta är ett magisterarbete gjort åt TEDxVasa samordnare rf. En juridisk person bestående enbart av en grupp frivilliga som ideellt arbetar för att hålla TEDx evenemang.

Språk: Engelska

Nyckelord: Ledning, Frivilliga, TEDx, Ledarskap

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Tiivistelmä

Minkä tahansa tapahtuman järjestäminen vaatii paljon suunnittelua ja monen eri tehtävän ratkaisemista, mikäli tapahtuma on pitkä tai iso niin tehtävälusta tulee olemaan vielä pidempi. TEDx tyyppinen tapahtuma tuo mukaansa omat haasteensa koska kaikki tehtävä työ tehdään aatteellisella pohjalla ilman minkäänlaista korvausta.

Vapaaehtoisten johtaminen on avainasemassa tehtävien ja tapahtuman onnistumiseen suhteen, ja voi myös olla hyvien ideoiden ja ehdotuksien lähde oikein tehtynä. Huono johtajuus taas joko henkilökohtaisella tai tyhmätasolla voi luoda häiriöitä jotka voivat uhata koko projektia.

Tämä päättötyö on toteutettu TEDxVasa samordnare ry:lle. Juridinen henkilö joka koostuu ryhmä henkilöistä jotka aatteellisesti tekee työtä TEDx tapahtumien järjestämisessä.

Kieli: Englanti

Avainsanat: Vapaaehtoistyö, TEDx, Johtaminen

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1. INTRODUCTION

In today's society there are a lot of commercial events, usually to promote a cause or as pure marketing and commercial event for a company or product. There are however also events that are made purely by enthusiasts and volunteers. TEDx is one of these event formats that are by the rules purely non-commercial, non-religious and non-political. Nobody gets paid; no money can be collected for any cause. The driving force behind this is to spread ideas in the form of short 18 minutes TED-talks that are left once the event is over. These ideas are meant to inspire people and to be free for all. Once the "dust is settled" no mention of the organizers remain. The main motto of TED "Ideas worth spreading" is the sole purpose of holding an event.

TED stands for Technology Entertainment and Design. The original conference was held in Silicon Valley in 1984 and continued as an annual technology focused event until 1990. Later TED moved headquarters to Vancouver Canada and also introduced the TEDx format.

TEDx is an independently organized TED style conference that is strictly governed by rules how this type of conference is to be held. As previously mentioned, no money can be made from this conference, and the sole purpose is to convey a message or idea through TED-talks. These 18-minute talk present one single idea through a story that hopefully gives the audience something to contemplate about.

In early 2016 the idea came about to host a TEDx in the city of Vaasa. This is the story of how we did it.

1.1 The purpose of my thesis.

My purpose is to valorise in western region of Finland what volunteering is about and what volunteering can contribute. This means that I strive is to describe, explain but also guide business leaders, audiences and inspiratory speakers, in their go for events, happenings and mission. More in detail:

This thesis will describe how TEDxVasa was organized, and to serve as a helpful guide for anybody who is interested in organizing a TEDx or of a similar type of conference. This thesis is written after the even has taken place and is therefore not to be read like a diary. The event rules regarding amount of audience, public relations and other TEDx specific rules limits how the event should be organized so the experiences cannot always be directly translated into another event form.

This thesis also includes a lot of material in the form of pictures from the event and appendices of the material sent to guest and speakers.

1.2 The context of my thesis

This thesis is about event and the organizing of the event TEDxVasa September 2017 and the organization of volunteers that is it inferred. TEDx events have been organized in Finland since 2008 and the second TEDx in the city of Vaasa will organized in March 2018.

As a post TEDx'er it is very interesting to follow what I am going to describe in this thesis and be able to evaluate what happens in 2018 compared to my writings and thoughts. My wish as a researcher is that more TEDx events will be organized in different parts of Finland.

Worldwide there has been over 19 000 TEDx event organized since the start and I assume that there are a lot of write-ups about arranging an event like this, but when looking from a Finnish perspective there is little written about organizing an event in Finland.

1.3 Limitations

This thesis is limited to organizing the event of TEDxVasa 2017. Organizing the event however implies that one must follow the rules defined by TED. The main and underlying idea behind the rules is that the event is to be *non-profit*. Even crowdfunding is not allowed, neither is collecting money for charity allowed. Nobody at the event, be it organizer, speaker or other can be paid any salary for the work done. The only compensation allowed is lodging, food and covering travel expenses.

The final TEDtalk can be a maximum of 18 minutes long. And the talk may not be religious, political or marketing in its content.

Furthermore, the audience may not exceed 100 people. If tickets are sold the maximum price is 100USD. Sponsors are not allowed to be mentioned in social media. No sponsor may have any influence on the talks or the event. The sponsors may not be on stage where the talks are held but they are allowed to be mentioned in the beginning of the livestream. As a rule of thumb, 25% of the event duration must consist of official TED talks. The event must start with the official TEDx video. The event may not be co-hosted with any other event and must stay separate and independent. The maximum duration of an event is one day. The TEDx event cannot be branded with a commercial name or co-branded. All the material used in the TED-talks must be owned by the speaker and no copyrighted material such as sounds and images can be used. The sponsors may be on the event webpage but not on the first page, the sponsors may only be represented on a separate sponsor's page.

To get the licence to host a TEDx event, one must first apply for it by filling in a document describing the underlying theme of the event, the idea why, when and where the event will be held.

Once and if approved, the licence with the chosen TEDx [AREANAME] will be available to the applicant for 12 months. The first time a licensee holds a TEDx event the maximum allowed in the audience is 100 people. This in combination with the maximum ticket price of 100\$ (USD) limits the budget to 10 000USD. This is also an underlying part of the rules to limit the amount of money to be spent on and collected for the event and this enforces voluntary work.

1.4 Terminology

In this section I am guiding the reader by presenting the central terminology, abbreviations as follows:

TED; Technology Entertainment and Design.

TEDx; Stands for an independently organized event within the rules of TED.

TED-talk; a talk limited to 18 minutes that is non-religious, - political or -marketing.

1.5 Disposition

In chapter two I mainly present the background to volunteering seen from a theoretical and a philosophical point of view. The fundamental part of organizing a TEDx is discussed, the voluntary effort and input required and what kind of management and organizing this requires.

In chapter three the goals set and different tasks that required organizing and work are presented under their specific topics.

In chapter four the results of organizing the event is presented according to best available information at the time of writing.

Chapter five contains my conclusions and thoughts about being a main organizer for an event like this.

2. LEADING VOLUNTEERS - EARLIER RESEARCH

In this chapter an understanding how to lead volunteers is presented. Leading volunteers differs from leading a paid workforce. I have made a review of some earlier studies and guides and summarized the parts that I have found to be the most helpful and informative for the topic of this thesis.

When I have done this work I have found there is not one single source that can provide an overview of all the tasks and work that is required to organize a successful TEDx, as most of the experiences gathered by the different TEDx events around the world, are not documented. TED provides a closed organizers portal where they have collected material, but this material is written by many different authors with events with different backgrounds and goals. There is therefore not any single guide that could help as a useful guide in organizing this event.

Since volunteering is an international phenomenon, I have of course tried to get an overview of literature and documents, but I have also made various choices. The authors I mostly use are those who have as I see it, described the volunteering from different aspects.

Thomas McKee was chosen, because he provided a simple frame of reference to categorize and think about the commitment and motives of different volunteers. These categories also cross over into regular employment work where the dedication and motivations of workers can be used.

Jennifer Ellis work was chosen since she provides a practical guide on how to structure the management of volunteers. These leadership techniques, just like the previous author, can also be used to some extent in regular management and leadership with paid employees.

Katharine Gaskin provides insights into how volunteers and paid employees differ from a leadership or management perspective and the recruitment model for volunteers.

2.1 Voluntary work and paid work, what is a volunteer?

As the title suggest, a volunteer does not provide his or her work for the exchange of a salary. When it comes to management (or leadership) of volunteers Katharine Gaskin (2018) made the conclusion;

“That the dominant professional/workplace model is not an adequate response to the diversity of volunteers’ characteristics, motivations and needs”. (Gaskin, 2018)

One reason for this is that the volunteer does idealistic work and that this work is not done for a direct monetary gain. Or to put it short; one cannot give orders to volunteers as they can simply decide to leave or refuse to do the task. Leading volunteers therefore *requires a more personal or individual approach to leading*, where motivating and keeping up the motivation of the volunteers is a time-consuming task. Here the leader needs to assume the role of the “human resources department” as well as the project manager ensuring that all goals can be reached.

2.2 Volunteer involvement model for recruiting volunteers

Gaskin categorizes a person’s volunteering involvement; i.e. the amount of time and effort and involvement a readiness to spend on cause into four different groups: Doubter, Starter, Doer and Stayer (Gaskin, 2018).

A “**Doubter**” is as the name says doubting and outside the scope of volunteering.

A “**Starter**” is person who has taken steps to start volunteering.

A “**Doer**” is a person started to volunteer, or is volunteering

A “**Stayer**” is a person who is committed to the volunteering work.

“The aim of the volunteering world and the volunteering infrastructure is to aid each transition in the most positive way possible, to transform the doubter into a starter into a doer into a stayer.” (Gaskin, 2018).

Transition from Doubter to Starter

For a doubter to become a starter the doubter need to not have any negative views on volunteering, here the organizations recruitment needs to create a positive and appealing image of volunteering by focusing on the positives of the work without pressure.

Transition from Starter to Doer

After the starter has taken the first steps he/she needs to be given the necessary introduction, orientation and training into their task volunteering. The goal is equip the volunteer with the required “tools” to be able to fulfil task suited to them.

Transition from Doer to Stayer

Once the volunteer can do the task the management or leadership becomes of critical importance. The important part here is to through management support the motivations of the volunteer, so the work done is felt as rewarding and worth the time spent.

2.3 Why does anybody volunteer?

Volunteering, like any job or task, requires motivation. Where motivation in general comes from, is not within the scope of this thesis, but what is within the scope for this thesis is the motivation to do voluntary work.

McKee (Why People Volunteer, read 1.2.2018) described the top three reasons of doing volunteer work in three categories; “*Self-serving drive*”, “*Relational drive*” and “*Belief drive*”. The first category a “**Self-serving drive**” is when the person is primarily serving him- or herself while doing the work. The person wishes primarily to gain something as the outcome of the volunteering. This gain is not directly monetary but more in the lines of gaining experience, friendship, networking, improving one’s CV or just gaining a new skill. McKee 2018 describes these self-serving volunteers to be frequent within political campaign volunteers as they share the political values and goals of the candidate and hope to get to benefit from these in the future.

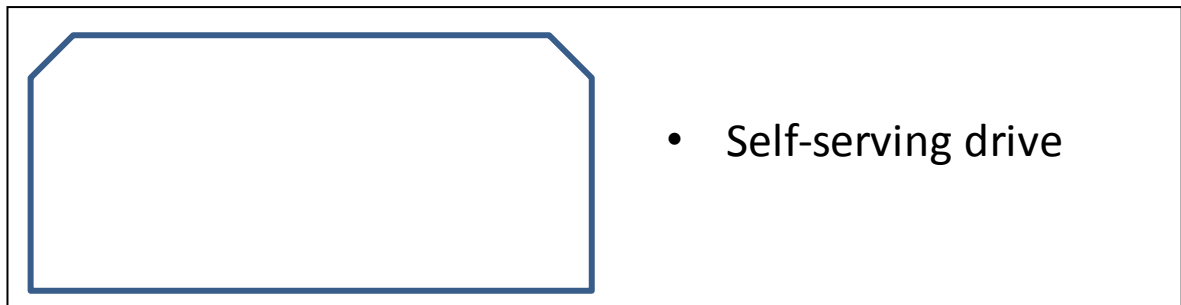


Figure 1: Illustration of levels of motivation.

The second category of volunteers McKee refers to as “**Rational volunteers**”. In this category the people share many of the same core needs as the self-serving volunteers, but the main difference is that an existing volunteer has required them to join. Here especially the seeking of friendship and sharing a cause is important. This category of volunteers is readily found as political volunteers but can be distinguished from the first category when asked what the political values are that they are campaigning for. This is due to the fact that they have been asked to join by a friend and like the politician they are working for but have not perhaps invested the time in studying the agenda that the first category of people had to before joining.

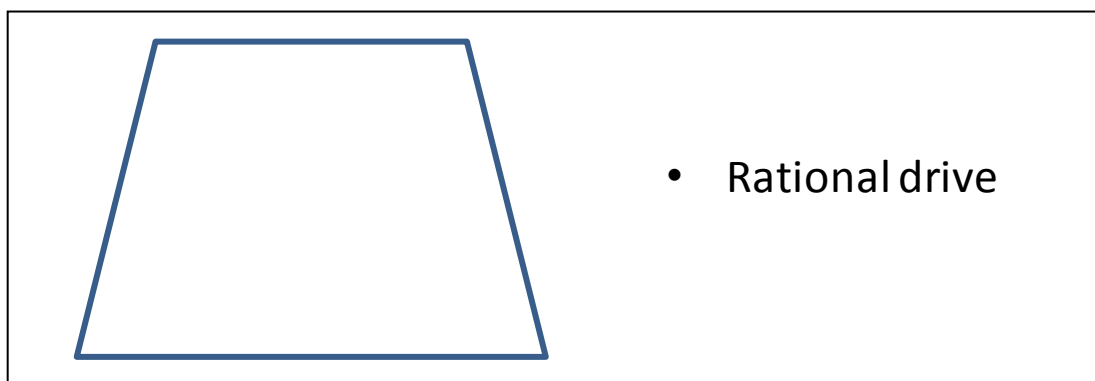


Figure 2: Illustration of levels of motivation.

The last category is “**Belief**” or believers; according to McKee these volunteers have the strongest commitment to the cause and work. These volunteers as the category suggests; believing in the cause that is trying to be achieved by to organisation. From this comes a strong will and want to contribute work and time. This category of people also put in the time to read up and study, to better be able to contribute to the cause.

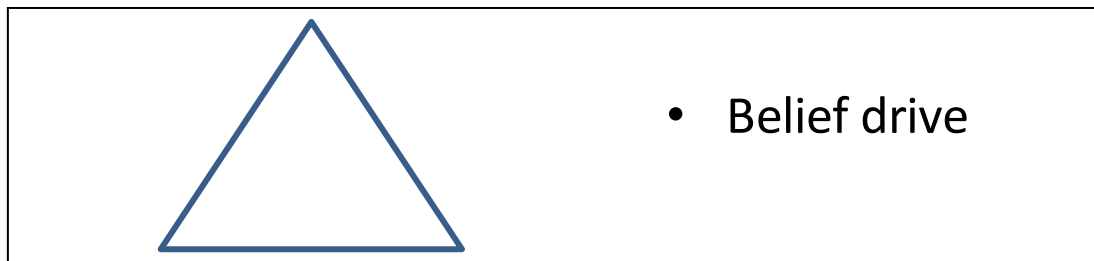


Figure 3: Illustration of levels of motivation

When looking at this categorization of people it is hard to place a person strictly into one category as a person can of course start in one and move to another during the voluntary work. But these categories prove their usefulness when creating incentive for the person to find motivation to do the work. When asking a volunteer that is self-serving the primary reasons should focus around the driving factors of this person like reminders of the skills to be gained and consequently in the end be added to the CV. A rational volunteer will of course also be enticed by the same but here it is worth to remember to team this person up with the self-serving person who recruited him or her to this cause, as this person is usually more knowledgeable in the cause or task. (My own reflections based upon theory and experience)

The most productive and enthusiastic volunteers are usually the believers. They require the least external motivation to keep on working. But this category of people again, are very involved and if the cause or goal changes they may lose their internal motivation. It is important with believers to “stay on the path” and not change the goals and the cause drastically, as this can result in them losing their motivation. As some believers also invest a lot of time and resources they can be your greatest most reliable strength but also your biggest risk if they do not agree with the management decisions. (My logical implications)

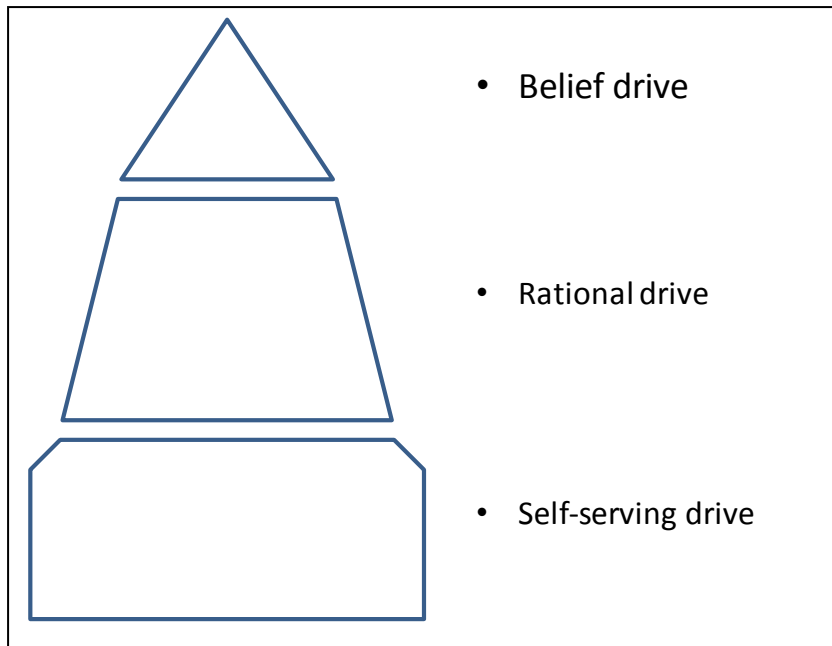


Figure 4: Illustration of levels of motivation

2.4 When does a volunteer stop contributing?

As the volunteers “move” between the categories described in the last section, their motivations and goals will also evolve. And sometimes this can lead to a volunteer not being as enthusiastic as before and not contributing the time and effort as previously. There is of course external influence within the organization that also influences how much a volunteer is motivated to contribute. McKee 2018 has described his vision of the seven reasons that causes this degraded motivation as follows:

1. The volunteer leader who does not know how to lead.

Not settings goals, not delegating tasks, not taking different skills into consideration, not making decisions. The list is almost endless when describing a leader who does not lead up to his role. Reasons two to six are all about the lack of leadership and summed up in this main reason.

2. No feedback about how the volunteer is doing

The lack of leadership and feedback thereof is according to McKee by far the biggest reason why people shy away from contributing or volunteering. The giving of direct

and concrete feedback is therefore one of the most critical leadership skills required when managing volunteers.

3. The feeling that a volunteer is not making a difference

Not all things done in any project get equal visibility amongst the other volunteers. It might also be that a part of the cause is just viewed as a supporting step on the way to achieving the bigger goals. It is therefore very important to remember to emphasise that all things leading to the goal are important. This is of course even more important when and if a task has taken a long time to complete but the direct results are not as visible and as the other parts.

4. Lack of professionalism

A code of conduct or rules that all agree volunteers to follow creates an “atmosphere with a purpose”. This might be as simple as notifying being late from a meeting or when not meeting an agreed timeline. A meeting agenda and a meeting summary also create the opportunity for all to stay up to date on progress when hindered from, or being late to a meeting.

5. Lack of communication

If there is no common place for, or procedure to help the exchange of information this will cause inefficiency amongst the volunteers. There also needs to be an opportunity for all members to make their opinion and voice heard and discussed.

6. Too much time wasted in useless or unproductive meetings.

Every meeting should serve a purpose, when entering the meeting the attendant should know from the agenda available before the meeting what items will be discussed and when things outside the agenda should be discussed. To help this there should be a meeting chairman who goes through the agenda and moderates the discussion so that all opinions can be heard regarding any questions or suggestion. This last part is one where the meeting can become unproductive if much of a meeting is spent outside the agenda discussing issues perhaps not even related to the cause.

7. No flexibility in volunteer opportunities and scheduling.

As the volunteer is giving his/her time and devotion to a cause this should be highly respected when scheduling meetings and tasks. The volunteer more often than not, is devoting spare time and not allowing the volunteer to manage this time by enforcing deadlines is taking away the freedom of the volunteer. This can of course not always be done when multiple volunteers are involved with a task, but the best possible compromise should be sought in cases like this. Equally important is to ask the volunteer what tasks are of interest and to try and provide support where it is needed if a task is too overwhelming for the volunteer.

[2.5 Best practises for managing volunteers.](#)

As the previous section covered a few reasons for a volunteer not contributing there is a need to cover how to get the volunteers engaged with the cause and tasks to be done. Ellis (The Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement, read 20.1.2018) has listed some best practises categorized into three different parts that should be a mirror or the opposite of the reasons in the last section.

Laying the Foundation

1. Valuing the role of volunteers

Within the organisation regardless of the cause, the volunteers themselves need to feel they are contributing and making a difference. But equally important is that the outside view of the organisation is that the volunteers are working for a cause and that this is regarded highly. As many volunteers as possible need to be visible if any media or PR material when published. There needs to be a clear statement of the importance of the volunteers. In addition to the "external view" the volunteers need to be able to influence the decision-making processes.

2. Defining rules and expectations

A "code of conduct" and common rules for how to act within the project will help the volunteers find a common way working. This rule should also include the statements to how new volunteers are accepted into the group and what the expectations from him/her are.

3. Developing volunteer management skills

The person or persons responsible for managing the volunteers should preferably have prior leadership experience; if this cannot be fulfilled then the person in charge should read up on leadership or get a “mentor” to help with this. The leader should also seek feedback from the volunteers as each group of volunteers and individual volunteer in the group have individual and unique requirements and ways to find motivation and to be motivated.

Developing the jobs and getting the right people

4. Reducing volunteer and group risk

In its most uncomplicated way; get an insurance for the volunteers in the group. This allows the volunteers to not think too much about potential material damage and focus more on the things needing attention. In a more profound way this risk can come from having the wrong volunteer in the group who wilfully or unwilfully acts against the common goal of the group. Here methods of selecting or screening the volunteers to the group should be considered, and way to remove a volunteer how wilfully causes harm to the group or the case.

5. Creating clear assignments

Ellis states that “Volunteers deserve a job title and a clear job description”. Once roles and responsibilities have been assigned it is easier for all volunteers to see the big picture and what skills is missing and what are the volunteers that is still needed to reach the goal.

6. Reaching beyond the circle

When searching for volunteers it can sometimes be hard to find the appropriate skills within the acquaintances of the current volunteers. By asking people to volunteer who are not known previously, it will add to the diversity of ideas and ways solve problems and complete tasks.

Creating an environment where volunteers feel they belong and want to stay

7. Orienting and training volunteers

New volunteers and even current ones require training when to be able to reach the set goals. The exchange of ideas of how reach a goal, or how it was reached previously is also important. This along with the assignments of the volunteers allows the individual volunteer to find a task or challenge they feel comfortable and productive with

8. Providing supervision

When tasks are being done there is a need to have follow up, uplifting feedback and suggestions. This to not have the volunteers feel left alone with their task. The leader that here has a supervisory role has a fantastic opportunity here to get feedback and in return provide feedback. The supervisory role here is emphasized because the volunteer should be given all opportunities possible to develop their skills and through this get a sense they are making a difference and are important.

9. Making volunteers feel they belong

When making decisions, be it big or small, the volunteers need to be included into the decision-making process. The need to feel part of the cause or the team has an impact on the motivation of the volunteers. As not all decisions can be a group decision, the volunteers should be invited to take part in the planning process and the possible directions and outcomes of decisions should be discussed and made clear.

10. Recognizing volunteer contributions

When a task is done or progressing or volunteer has solved a problem, this accomplishment should be taken into consideration or even celebrated at the next meeting. If the volunteer is not at the meeting effort should be taken to inform the volunteer that this was noticed at the meeting. This of course if the volunteer likes getting recognition for the work they have done. If the volunteer is more introvert, then other means of recognising their contribution should be done.

2.6 Motivation and self-determination theory, SDT

Edward L. Deci, Anja H. Olafsen and Richard M. Ryan states that “*Self-determination theory (SDT) is a macro theory of human motivation that evolved from research on intrinsic and extrinsic motivations and expanded to include research on work organizations and other domains of life.*” (Deci, Olafsen, Ryan 2018).

Their research is a summary of the impacts of leadership and different leadership and management methods can have on motivation. Here motivation and management are categorized with “Controlled motivation” and “Autonomous motivation”. Autonomous motivation is a “self-fuelling” type of motivation where the participating in, and doing the task is of free choice and will, there purpose of the work provides the motivation. Whereas Controlled motivation on the other hand is a more goal, target and consequence as a way of producing results. Here the motivation is to complete the task to receive a reward, usually monetary or similar. Controlled motivation is good for sort term goals but from a management perspective requires new goals to add to the controlled motivation.

Motivation is also further separated intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation being a subtype of autonomous motivation, where the behaviour in the task itself enforces the motivation of the individual. Extrinsic motivation is about being involved in a task to receive a tangible reward or reach a goal. The main differentiator here is the performing of the task or reaching a goal.

“those with more intrinsic work goals were more flexible in their work than those with extrinsic goals, and that individuals with relatively high intrinsic work aspirations who engaged in learning opportunities were less emotionally exhausted than those with relatively higher extrinsic aspirations” (Deci, Olafsen, Ryan 2018).

2.7 Conclusion

Based on this short theoretical background I now conclude the second chapter by pointing out what central building blocks I take with me into the field.

1. Leading a group of volunteers can be done with many of the best practises in what I would like to call *corporate leadership*. But in volunteering no orders can be given without the risk of facing the consequences of reduced motivation amongst the volunteers.

2. The individual's level of commitment to the cause needs attention, as the volunteers instead of receiving payment give their time and commitment to the cause. Here lies the greatest strength of the volunteers but also the greatest risk when doing work for a cause.
3. There also need to be a lot of attention to the fact that achievements and reached goals need to be recognized and celebrated within the whole group, as this will have an impact on how motivated the volunteers are in future tasks.
4. As this group of volunteers might not all share the same values and backgrounds there is an inherent need for common rules, procedures, from the requirement process to the way meetings are held. With a special emphasis on the decision-making process.
5. Providing feedback and asking for feedback from the volunteers is important for the duration of the projects, as well as together setting up a common and realistic plan how to achieve the common goal.

3. TEDxVasa STORY

In this chapter I present and describe all the steps from first contact to final execution of TEDxVasa. I am here referring to what prof. Johansson said in 2005 as follows; Johansson 2005 stated

“You can’t tell a story about a journey if you haven’t been on the journey and come back.”

I present the TEDx journey in these various sections spontaneous to-do list way as I see it is impossible to say what the correct order to describe the work is. The chapters contain mostly compulsory building blocks to make TEDx events.

3.1 The goals set by TEDxVasa

There were several goals set at the beginning of this project. The TEDxVasa crew or the organizers set the following goals; reachability, quality, branding and visibility. These all four improve the chances to arrange future events.

3.1.1 Broad sponsor base.

The result of TEDxVasa will be a collection of TEDtalks that can be viewed online. There is a time-slot of a few seconds in the beginning of the video for the sponsors to show. The plan was therefore from the very beginning to engage the companies that could benefit most from this international exposure as sponsors. But also display educational opportunities besides the industry. To provide a balanced sponsors list that accurately portrays the Vaasa region.

3.1.2 Networking opportunity for the audience members.

Attending a TEDx is a suitable place for people to network and get acquainted. As this was realized at the very beginning of the planning, this was set as one of the goals of TEDx to get the audience to consist of different and as varying backgrounds as possible. This was accomplished by getting the local industry and educational institutes involved to provide audience suggestions. The visitors of the event were mostly invited by the sponsor, we conveyed to the sponsors our wish that these invited guests were to be people who could benefit by getting new connections or acquaintances at the event.

3.1.3 A diverse group of organizers.

One of the goals set at the beginning was to get as a diverse group of people as possible, when looking at the educational and career background as possible. This to get the a broad “landscape of opinions” and input to how to best organize the event. In addition to the previously mentioned diversities one goal was to also have diverse cultural and a good balance of women and men amongst the organizers.

3.1.4 One or more talks that stand out.

In the end when the event is held, one of the goals was that one of the videos would gain some notoriety and through this indirectly “make a name” of TEDxVasa as a properly organized event. This would indirectly help coming TEDxVasa events to get more volunteers so that there would be a “queue” of willing volunteers. This “queue” would serve to allow the most enthusiastic speakers in the future to be selected.



Picture 1, “Odd is good” TEDtalk, Ulf Johansson (TEDxVasa 2017)

3.2 Making the event with a minimal number of contracts.

Contracts are generally good, but since TEDx is type of event figuring around volunteering and giving one's time without reward. This philosophy was quickly also adopted that we would rather have a verbal agreement with all parties than write contracts and agreements. A contract is needed only if there is a dispute. We therefore just accepted that a promise and verbal agreement would be our way of conducting business.

3.3 Speakers

The TED-talks are what will remain after the live event has been held; their speeches or talks will be live online. Getting good speakers is therefore one of the most critical tasks to be done.

The first speaker to confirm his attendance was Rune Westergård. He was contacted because he is a local author with a global message about the environment. It all started by a lookup of his phone number and a call. Rune Agreed to do a talk even though we at this time still did not have a date for the event. This first OK from a speaker was a huge boost for morale and gave a lot of confidence to basically call anybody. The word "call" here needs to be emphasised. We decided early on that we will take a personal touch when contacting the different speakers and to be in direct contact with each speaker.

The following five speakers we got on-board were all proposed and discussed during a meeting and later called. There were also rejections from speakers, but these were all due to difficulties with the proposed time for the event. Later we held a speaker's audition, this speaker's audition was an online event on social media where we asked people to pitch their TED-talk in a video to us. During a planning meeting we watched all the submissions and then voted on the best four that gave us the last four speakers.

3.4 Sponsors

Getting sponsors or funds was one if not the hardest and most time-consuming tasks of organizing the whole event and ended up taking up time that could have been far better spent on organizing the actual event day tasks.

The first attempt at getting a sponsor was done by presenting the goals and TEDx concept to a local company whose primary goal is to cooperate with local the local industry and market the region. The Idea was not to get monetary funds from this first contact but rather get them excited enough to use their contact network and call ahead before we made our initial presentation. In this way we would not have been some previously unknown group who “just stumbled over the doorstep”. This did however not go as planned and we did not get this help. In retrospect this was a good thing as this only fuelled the desire to “march directly any company” and present our goals. Pitching TEDxVasa to potential sponsors took over a month before the first sponsor signed on.

Getting a sponsor took a lot of failed presentations. Only on the forth of fifth meeting were we able to finally get one sponsor on-board. In retrospect this was a good thing as the initial failures gave important feedback to what worked and was bad in the proposal, and after constant improvements to the way the message was delivered the companies started to believe more in what we were doing.

In the end the sponsors pitch can be more or liked to a TED- talk. A 20 minutes speech backed up with a presentation explaining our goals and ambitions. I later used the words that this was my TED-talk that I held over and over again and over time got better and better at presenting. The biggest lesson learnt here was to be persistent and always look back what worked and what was needed to be removed.

3.5 Volunteers

The first formal meeting was held right before an Alumni evening hosted by Novia Polytechnic and Diff. There were seven people present at the meeting, who all had a previous knowledge and understanding of what TEDx was. This meeting was more or less a brainstorming meeting of what we hoped to achieve with a TEDx and what kind of effort we could be expected to make in order to make a good event. One of the most important “soft value” goals was also shared by all from the very start; “We should aim to make the best TEDx event there has been in Finland”. Mediocre efforts was not what we felt the would reflect our ambitions.

The next important things discussed was how to get the most diverse group of volunteers possible and what tasks we needed to get done and have expertise in. By the end of the first meeting we knew we needed to have at least double the amount

of volunteers and that our “Set of skills and experience” in the current group was not enough to get a great job.

One of the volunteers proposed putting out a message on a bulletin board system in a larger company in the region to get volunteers. We also got a few names of friends or friends of friends by brainstorming on what tasks and expertise was needed. These people would be contacted and asked personally.

In the end we were over several months able to get around 80% of the estimated skills and experienced volunteers we needed. The remaining skills and tasks were done by taking the most experienced people we had in the particular area, teaming up as a team of two and having them to a best effort on the task.



Picture 2, TedxVasa organizers and camera crew (TEDxVasa 2017)

3.6 Various tasks to be solved for the event

There is a myriad of things to plan and to do. Listing all task is an impossible task but there are a few tasks that require more attention than others. Here is a shortlist of a few of these

3.6.1 Planning meetings and documentation of tasks and progress.

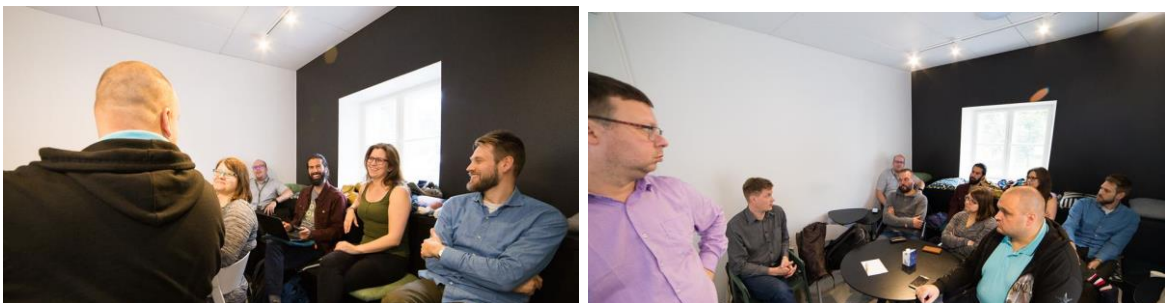
Sitting down and having face to face meeting between all the organizers was a weekly occurrence the two months before the event, prior to this the meetings were on a bi-weekly basis. The day to day and spontaneous progress reporting and asking of opinions on some matters were done in a closed Facebook group. In this Facebook group we also made “event invites” to all the meetings and sometimes had polls where we collectively voted on certain questions.



Picture 3 and 4, planning meeting pictures (TEDxVasa 2017)”

The Face to face meetings were documented and the meeting minutes uploaded to a common google drive. These meeting minutes were also linked into the Facebook group for all to see.

The face to face meetings had a few different formats and were not effective in the beginning as they were unmoderated discussions. After a while the meetings however got more effective as bullet points of all tasks were made and all task were assigned to one or as the strive was to a small team of at least two volunteers.



Picture 5 and 6, planning meeting pictures (TEDxVasa 2017)

At the beginning of each meeting all previous open tasks were listed, where the person responsible simply stated if the task is done or not done. This way the open tasks could be discussed in less than ten minutes leaving the rest of the time for other discussion and planning.

3.6.2 Marketing and public relations

Having a presence online and building an image was recognized as one of the most important tasks from the very beginning when trying to get sponsors. A webpage was setup as one of the first tasks; this webpage was not animated or spectacular in any way but served as our initial online presence. The cost and hosting of this webpage was covered by our first sponsor, a local computer retailer. Later on, we got a sponsor that redesigned our webpage as their contribution to our event.

The other channels that did not require money, were different social media outlets, like Facebook, Linked In, Twitter and a YouTube channel. These were setup first and foremost to “reserve” the name “TEDxVasa” as anybody can just start a page on these sites with that name we felt we should reserve them and use them for our own needs.

As a part of the PR we also made a Press release where we invited the local press to come and interview us. The TEDx rules state that any press release needs to be checked and approved by TED in Canada; this process of getting the approval took one week. Also, the rules say there must be a mention of the differences between TED and TEDx and that the local event is an independent event not organized by TED in Canada.



LOKALT EVENEMANG VASA | 29.6.2017

Tedx kommer till Vasa



Andreas Böck, Johan Bjäli, Thomas Märd och Kristoffer Jansson vill ta Ted talk till Vasa. Foto: Fredrik Westblom

Har du sett videor med 20 minuter långa tal på nätet är det med stor sannolikhet Ted talks det handlar om. Nu kommer evenemanget till Vasa.



Picture 7 and 8, pictures of news articles (Own pictures)

3.6.3 Event Guests

The rules of TEDx allows for first time and smaller events to have a maximum of 100 people in the audience. This 100 includes the speakers and volunteers. The guests of TEDxVasa was invited indirectly as all sponsors got a certain amount of tickets that they had to invite people with. The biggest sponsors got 8 tickets and the smaller ones on average half that amount. The sponsors were all requested to send the contact information of to the attendees to us so that we could send the invite and confirm that they are going to show up to the event. One day before the actual event the confirmed guests amount was 75 out of 100 people. As an empty seat or half-filled auditorium does not look good on a TEDx video measures were quickly taken to invite friends and acquaintances so that we could fill the seats. Five seats were filled by putting out a post on social media that we are giving away tickets. The people who responded to this were students, and for reasons unknown to this day they were all foreign exchange students. This might be a small indication that the TEDx events are better internationally. The rest of the unissued ticket was given to sponsors, who had asked if there are any additional tickets available.



Picture 9, 10, 11, and 12, Various event pictures (TEDxVasa 2017)

3.6.4 Social media

An important part the social media channels had was just to get visibility for our event and make people aware that this event will be held. This was accomplished by posting the progress of our confirmed speakers, pictures of our planning meetings and sometime just posting videos from TED. Our strategy was to have two to three “posts” per week so that we would “stay relevant” and popup enough on the social feeds of people that the event could not be easily forgotten.



Picture 13 and 14, pictures used in social media (TEDxVasa 2017)

3.6.5 Sponsors

Providing value to the sponsors was as previously described, one of the most time-consuming tasks, getting the sponsors on-board took over 6 months of constant effort. Finally, we ended up making a few packages to the sponsors that allowed them to get eight of four tickets, depending on the amount of money they were willing to sponsor. The TEDx rules state that a sponsor may be mentioned only 4 seconds in the beginning of a video and once during the livestream. And also, that the sponsors are not allowed to be listed on the “landing page” of our homepage. Furthermore, no mention of the sponsors is allowed on the TEDx social media. Needless to say, we were asking for money and saying their company logo in the end will be visible for

four seconds out of eighteen minutes. Our marketing pitch therefore circled around that the event itself will be an excellent opportunity to network and to find new contacts in the region. We gave each sponsor one ticket to the “Speakers dinner” the night before the event.



Picture 15, Sponsors presentation for video and event (TEDxVasa 2017)

3.7 Speakers coach

The idea to have a speaker's coach copied from a TEDx event in Germany. The basic idea is that the speaker would perform their speech over skype to the speaker's coach and then get feedback what could be done better and how the message could be delivered better. One of the organizers knew of a native English-speaking entrepreneur who gave courses on how to make better presentations. This person was contacted, and he agreed to give one free hour of coaching to each speaker, if there was any further coaching and improvement required the speaker would pay for the extra time.

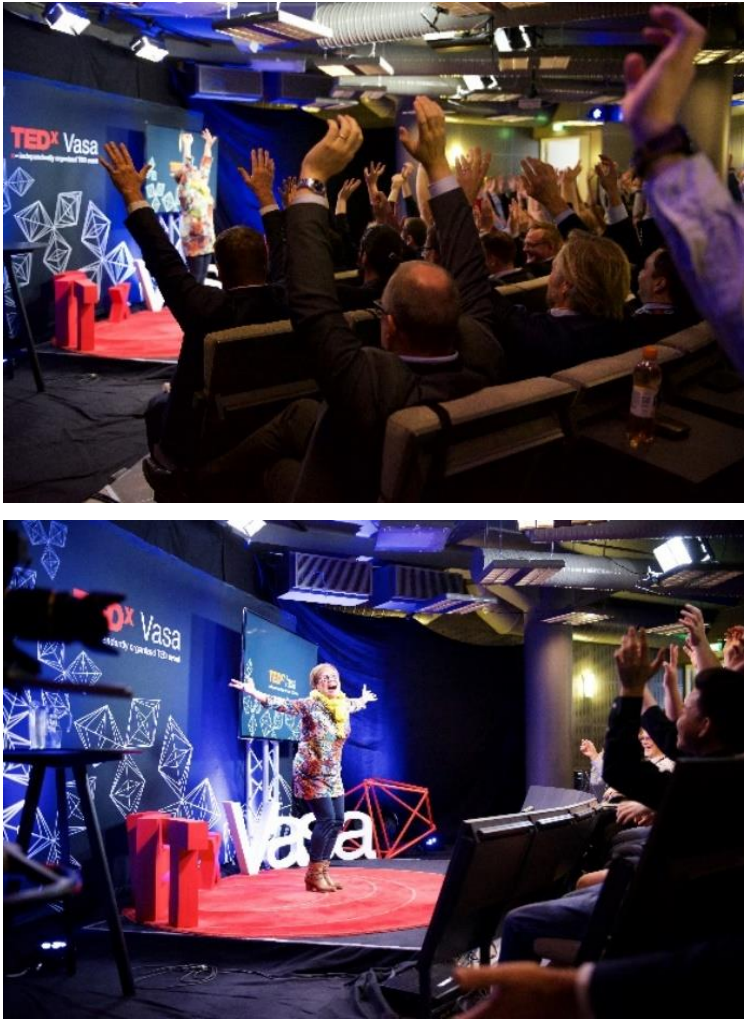
Involving the speakers coach was one of the best things we did, the speakers themselves said that the feedback they got was very constructive and they made a lot of changes to what they said and how they said it. Another benefit was that the speakers coach also agreed to be the moderator and speaker at the event.



Picture 16, Speakers coach and moderator, Paul Wilkinson (TEDxVasa 2017)

3.8 Audience warmup

On frequently reoccurring element in any TEDtalk is that the audience and their reactions is shown in and during the speech or talk. In order to get the audience to relax and show their reactions and not suppress them. We got the tip from TEDxUmeå organizers to have somebody who would warm up the audience. The first suggestion was a comedian aptly named Ted. But later a laughing Yoga instructor was proposed, and this was deemed to be the more relaxing choice.



Picture 17, Audience warmup, Laughing Yoga (TEDxVasa 2017)

3.9 Budget

TEDx rules allow for a maximum of 10 000\$ to be received as money in sponsorship. The rules therefore encourage that companies offer services instead of money. Services were offered as webpage hosting and design, catering, venue location, video editing and streaming. The money from sponsorships was used to pay for the travel and housing of the ten speakers, catering for 100 people and also for food for around 25 people during the two day event. What we had left was used to order rollups and a stage backdrop. In short, the money spent was divided as follows; 30% speakers travel and housing, 40% catering and gift bags, 20% stage backdrop and marketing. The remaining 10% was kept for unexpected expenses and later promotion of the event videos.

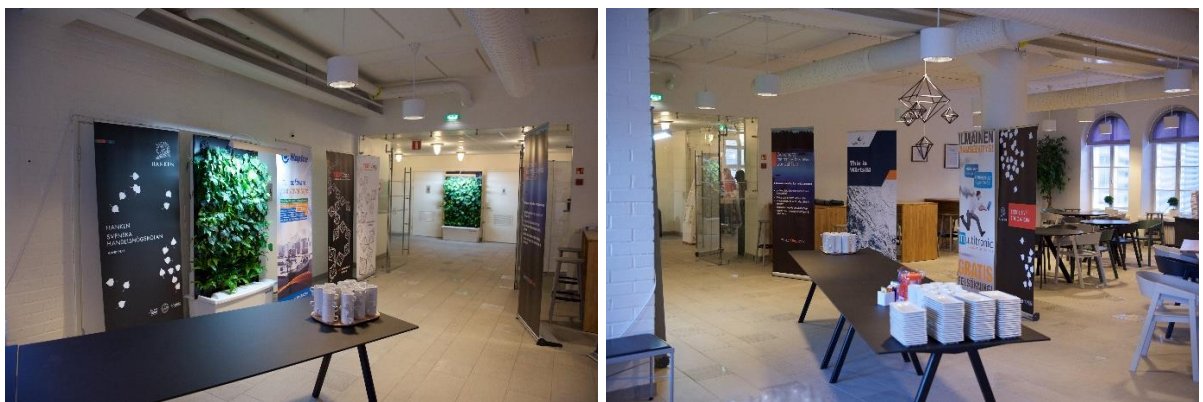
Some unexpected costs not accounted in the initial budget was an insurance for the crew and nobody realized that the crew also needs to eat on the evening prior to the event while setting up the stage. The day before the event a proposal was also made to have a professional makeup artist to make the speakers look their very best; this cost could also luckily be covered from the reserve money saved.



Picture 18, Pictor camera and video preparations (TEDxVasa 2017)

3.10 Venue for the event

Finding a venue for the event proved to be fairly simple as all the locations that were inquired were in favour to provide their facilities for the event. Not all had the opportunity to provide their auditorium for the specific date of the event as they had prior bookings. Another challenge was that not all auditoriums were optimally suited with a stage and with proper places to place the cameras to get as many different angles as possible for the videos and livestream.



Picture 19 and 20, Sponsors stands and serving catering (TEDxVasa 2017)

3.11 Practical problems to be solved

There were a lot of tasks that could be planned and executed as planned. But when making an event for the first time there are bound to be things that are cannot be predicted and planned for. Experience here of all the volunteers is invaluable. Here are some of the unexpected things we had to solve with a moment's notice. When we got our venue location we were told we could start in the afternoon at two o'clock. The auditorium had been full of students in a lecture. What had been unnoted, was that the lecture was a shared streamed lecture with another school. The video feed was therefore being processed and uploaded by a computer on a desk where the stage should be. This processing and uploading took two hours delaying our planned start by the same amount of time. We had a margin of time but this postponed not one but two hours. We also noticed that there were technical issues with the big TV we were going to use to project the presentation material on. It was later identified as a faulty HDMI input port of the tv. This was luckily found quite quickly but required that we got an external HDMI splitter the next morning.

Other things were running to the hardware store getting clamps in order to hang black sheets of cloth in order to get the stage background as dark as possible. Many trivial things like this made us miss the planned schedule by several hours. The original plan was to be ready by ten in the evening but in reality, we were ready three hours later. During this time when most of the volunteers were working hard on pure adrenaline, the video crew reminded us that somebody should get some pizza for all the crew. The planning had focused a lot around the event, guests and speakers and the nobody had before this mentioned that the organizers also needs to eat.



Picture 21 and 22, Crew pizza and stage details (TEDxVasa 2017)

The important lesson here is not about how trivial some of the practical issues can be, but more that a collective group of people can forget some to plan simple things and becoming focused too much on certain parts of the agenda. The big issues cannot always be solved in a short time, but for the small things there should be somebody with the dedicated role of just solving the small tasks that appear. The things listed in the plan is also not to be concerned about, it is the things that nobody has thought to be on the list that will cause the most disruptions. It is here where a big part of the event is made or broken.



Picture 23 and 24, Stage during setup and live (TEDxVasa 2017)

3.12 “Green room”

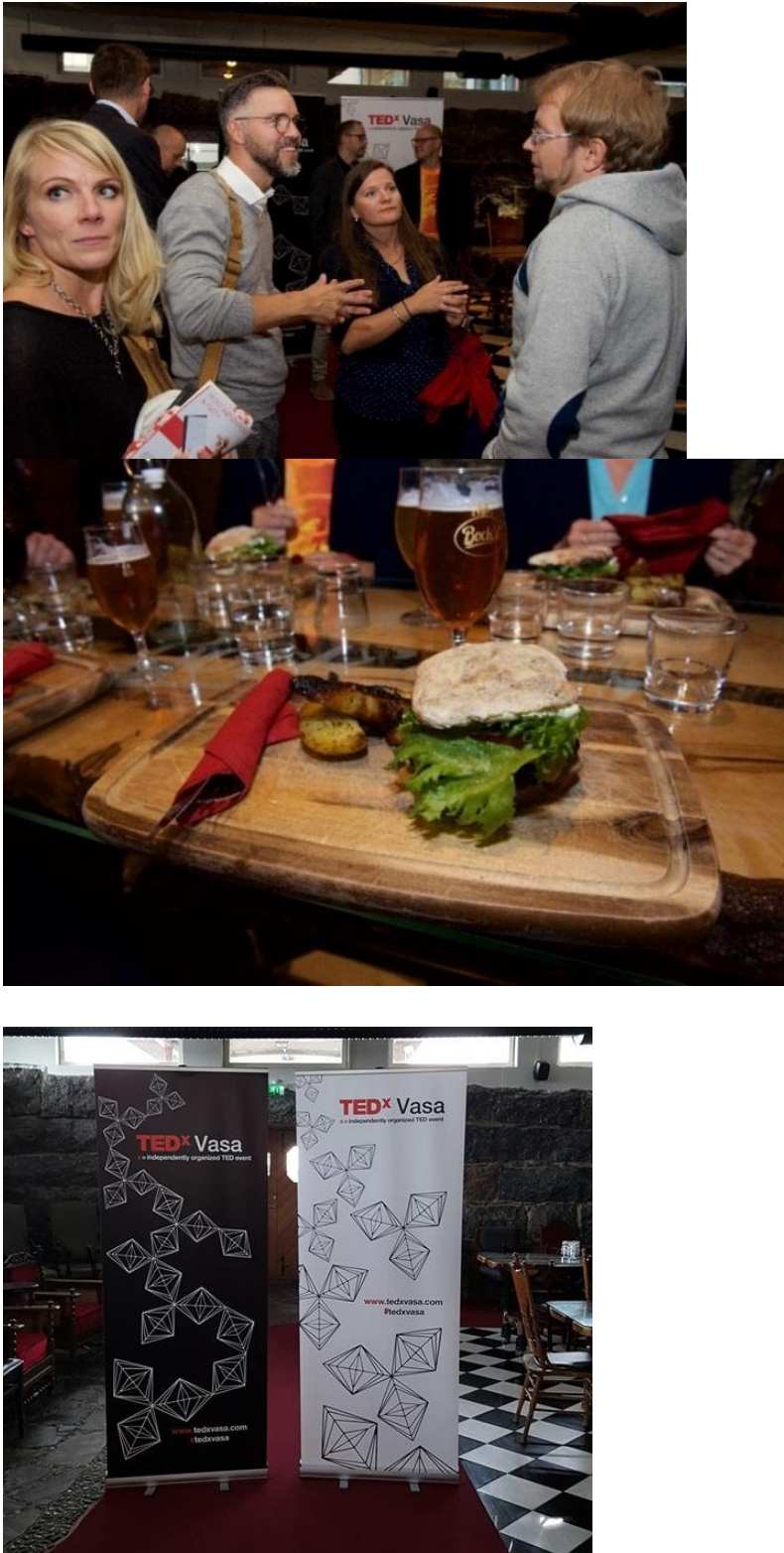
The event was planned to be a full day event, the speakers asked to get a green room, or a room where the speakers could wait and focus on their speech. The venue luckily had a separate small building where we brought food and drinks and had the live stream on for them to watch. The makeup artist was also stationed here, and one volunteer was there to cater to the needs of the speakers. One request from the speakers was to have fruits. As we had only snacks and soft drinks. This green room was also a “no go zone” for the guests and volunteers. Our goal was to give the best possibility to focus on the coming speech delivery. The speakers were of course free to go and watch the presentations and, in the breaks, mingle with the audience if they chose to do so. No pictures exist of the green room after the event started as this was off limits, even for our own photographer and we stated this to speakers that this is **their** place.



Picture 25, Green room (TEDxVasa 2017)

3.13 Speakers Dinner

The night before the event we had a speaker's dinner. Invited to this event were as the name suggests all the speakers, but also one person from each of the sponsors. The main goal and purpose of this event was to have one time where there were no TEDx rules to guide what we can and cannot do. The secondary purpose was also to give a chance to the speakers to get to know each other and the TEDxVasa crew before the event. And also, to get a few familiar faces from the sponsors. In the end only, half of the speakers were able to make it to the dinner and the same can be said about the sponsors. The biggest group of people were the volunteers of TEDxVasa crew. In the end we were about 30 people attending this dinner.



Picture 26,27 and 28, Speakers dinner (TEDxVasa 2017)

3.14 Guest hospitality

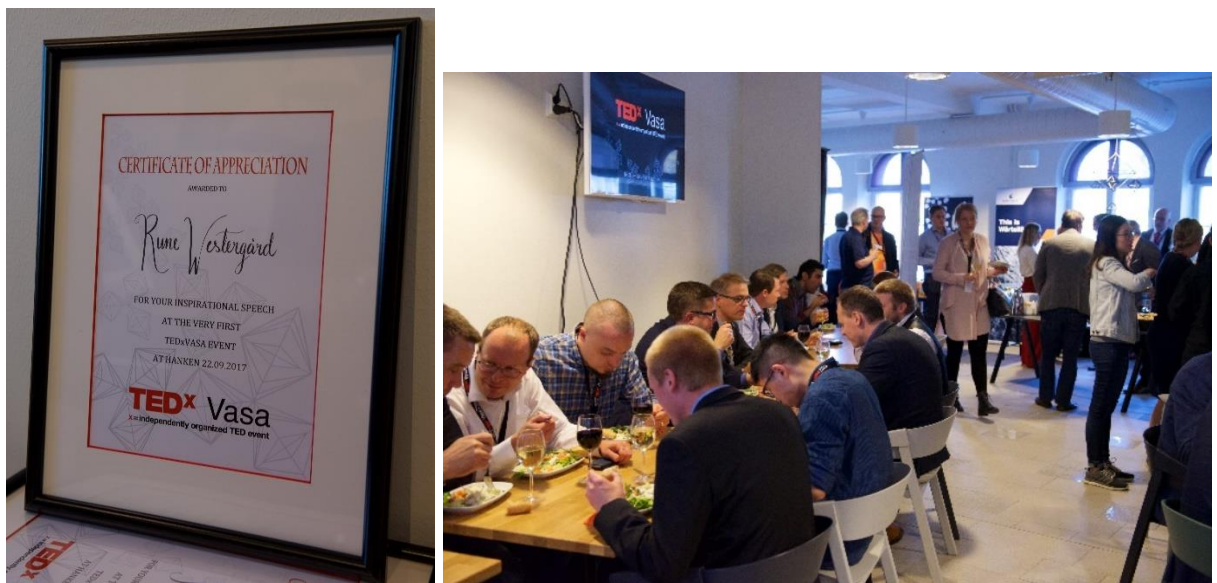
Making a good first impression can have significant impact how the rest of the day is perceived. Receiving a gift or a present when arriving to TEDxVasa was decided to

be a clever way of impacting the “first impression” a visitor should get. We therefore had some TEDxVasa gift bags printed and made along with a “power bank” with the TEDxVasa logo. Some sponsors also provided some small items for this gift bag. After this hopefully positive surprise we lead the visitors into the dining area where they were given a glass of sparkling vine. In the breaks we served red and white vine along with some salads and other quick to eat cold dishes. All this to have a “relaxing and fun experience” for the visitors.



Picture 29 and 30, Gift bags and guest tickets (TEDxVasa 2017)

The guest hospitality for the speakers was providing a personal pickup from the airport to the hotel. We also added an amount upfront for room service at the hotel for each speaker. This would accomplish, or at least we hoped that it would, that the speakers would not have to think about transportation logistics and parking as we also booked parking for speakers coming by car. The room service was added so that speakers could recover from the strain of travelling by getting the drinks and food they wanted and not having to possibly lookup a shop where this could be bought at a more reasonable price. All this was to give the best possibilities to the speakers to just focus on the speech or talk.



Picture 31 and 32, Speakers gift and lunch break (TEDxVasa 2017)

3.15 The food at the event

The food for the event was chosen specifically to be of a “lighter” variety. The guests and speakers sit and listen all day, so a heavy but delicious steak was out of the question. In the end we chose to go with cold dishes, salads mostly and salty snacks along with red and white wine, there was of course also non-alcoholic options available. In addition to this we had coffee and sweet snacks. The food was also selected as a food that can be eaten standing up. Since standing up would hopefully cause the guests to interact more and mingle. The biggest reason for eating and standing was to keep to the schedule by saving time and not having the guest sit

down and thus simply “the logistics”. There was of course a limited amount of table space available for those who felt they would rather sit down while eating.

The Menu that was served:

Tunnbröd med rökt lax
Frönknäckebröd ned västerbottenost

Grönsallad med vinägrett
Lax-carpaccio
Ceasarsallad med kyckling
Brödost och melon på salladbädd
Fazer tomat-olivbröd
Fazer pecan banguette
Bredbar röra med ärter och färskost

Kaffe / tee, Mini bebè bakelse, Fazer choklad



Picture 33 , Coffee break during event (TEDxVasa 2017)

3.16 Safety

As previously mentioned briefly an event insurance was purchased for the equipment, and volunteers. But when it comes to safety there is a lot is also the audience to take into consideration. A full day event in an auditorium where everybody must sit for many hours and the audience is represented all ages of adults. The first step was to contact the venue location to see what kind of safety they already had concerning fire exits and emergency aid. In the event of a power failure or other similar we also talked to the caretaker of the building and located the fuse box and request to have the ventilation and air circulation increased during the day. The alarm system was also required to be disabled when we were setting up the stage and after the event restoring the auditorium to its original state. We also made a list of different skills of the volunteers i.e. who had got some first aid training and similar. The result was that we had found that we could in the unlikely event of something drastic call on the following skill sets; first aid training, a volunteer firefighter and CPR and defibrillator that the venue had could also be operated by the volunteers.

For the actual event we had a brief security action point for the audience where we told them about the fire exits and that who and how an emergency exit would be handled. We also made disinfectant agency available during the breaks so that people could avoid a possible flu since there was a lot of hand shaking. We also had bowls of store bought menthol “cough candy” to reduce the coughing in the audience during the event.

In the end the safety measures did not show any positive or negative results. And the event was held without any incidents.

3.17 The Event

The day of the event started with Murphy 's Law, by me personally oversleeping for an hour, and this posed a small delay since I had the keys to the venue. This was all due to the fact that, I had broken my phone during the previous days organizing. I had acquired a temporary phone to use until I got my own phone back. But this phone had performed and update during the night and did not because of this reason sound the wake-up alarm. Luckily this did not cause any huge issues to the start of the day.

At nine in the morning the speakers showed up to for final rehearsals and to go through some guidelines with the video crew. The most crucial point with this common session being that; we are making a live show and that anything can happen. And that if anybody should forget their talk, line, stumble in their word or there was any technical issues. That then we would simply just “rewind the last seconds in our head” and start again from where were and say the line again. In essence; making a mistake was completely ok and that the final video would be cut together from the best parts.

It was also agreed that we if the speaker is not happy with some part of their speech that we would reshoot these parts during the breaks or immediately after the speech.



Picture 34 and 34, Speakers preparation meeting (TEDxVasa 2017)

The guest started to arrive at eleven o'clock; here we were caught a bit off guard since we were not expecting the guests for another half hour. Luckily this was a quick fix by simply sitting down at our guest registration desk.



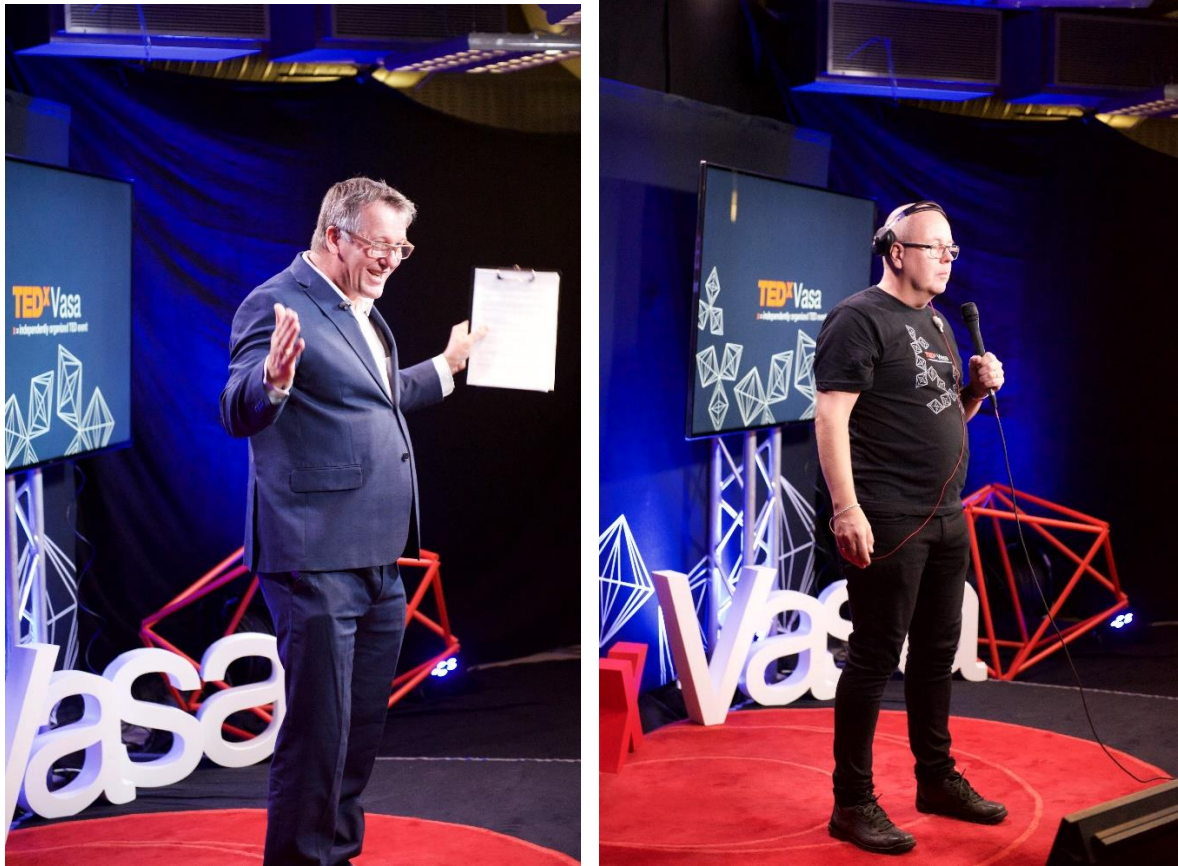


Picture 35, 36, 37 and 38 Registration and compliments (TEDxVasa 2017)

The guests were signed in and all received their gift bag and after this complementary sparkling wine.

At five to noon, now one hour after the first guest arrived we started to tell the people to move into the auditorium. And at noon we showed the mandatory TEDx intro video that starts off every TEDx event.

This was followed by the safety speech and an explanation to the audience that they also should “rewind” in their mind if we do a retake and most importantly, we are doing live “tv” here so anything can happen, and they should be patient if there are any technical issues. This was to make the audience feel involved in a unique event and to think of themselves as more than just spectators. They were to consider themselves as an important part that provides feedback to the speakers and that the speakers needs to connect with them. Naturally phones were also asked to be switched off during the entire day.



Picture 39 and 40, Audience preparation (TEDxVasa 2017)

This was followed by the audience warmup and finally the first TED-Talk of TEDxVasa.

The first talk went off without any technical issues. And more importantly, the speaker coach had suggested this speaker and topic as a good start as the speaker had taken additional training with the speaker's coach to refine the speech and its presentation. This "success" was however short-lived as the second speech was restarted three times, we had two wireless microphones and the second one unplugged itself and we had no audio recorded for a few minutes. There was nothing to do but to take a backup microphone and start over, and this time the microphone was in a bad spot and picked up a lot of "scratching noise". Luckily the second speaker was able to remain calm and delivered the same energy and presentation on the third time and, in the end made a great speech. Here all the talks with the speakers and the audience to "rewind" and accept this as things that can happen when you are live paid off.

The rest of the speeches went a lot better as the “teething issues” had been considered during the latter part of the event.



Picture 41, Second talk of the event (TEDxVasa 2017)

In the evening after event, there was an after party at one of the sponsors. Here there was no agenda, no plan. Just having a good night out.

3.18 Simultaneous screening

In addition, the main event we were able to convince a few other locations to have free screening. This meant that the live event was screened officially at least four other locations. These being, Ritz, Wärtsilä, Hanken and also Novia.

3.19 Post event tasks

After the event the obligatory tasks according to TED is to within 48 hours send the list of attendees to TED so that a questionnaire can be sent out to get feedback on the event. The results of this questionnaire can be seen in Attachment 1.

The speakers also need to sign a “speech waiver” stating that their talk can be published on the official TEDx YouTube page. And that their talk is not plagiarized.

After this the editing of the TEDx videos can start. Here the colour corrections and darkening of edges of the videos was crucial to make the videos more professional. The tempo and way the talk was delivered was also modified to make the talk more interesting, although this part is very subjective for the viewer. The editing and cutting was done by the video sponsor of the event.



Picture 42, Live stream without colour correction (Own picture)



Picture 43, Colour and light corrected released talk (Own picture)



Picture 44, live stream (Own picture)



Picture 45, Colour and light corrected released talk (Own picture)

After the videos are released then the work continues by paying the bills, these at this stage mostly being catering and travel expenses.

4. RESULTS

Based upon the targets and goals set I will in this chapter describe the results and their outcome.

4.1 Event

In Attachment 1 the results of the event questionnaire are displayed, based upon this the public opinion is that the audience had a good time and enjoyed being at the event. As all of the volunteers were doing this for the first time, one can only be more than satisfied with the results.



Picture 46, Social media post (Mia Liljeberg, LinkedIn)

4.2 Sponsors

Once again referring to attachment 1 as it is one of the few ways of measuring the event. The audience consisted of sponsors and the invitees of the sponsors and their feedback speak.

Had a chance not only to listen, but also to participate in the first tedx talks in Finland. Thank you TedxVaasa!



14 Likes · 1 Comment

Like Comment Share

Picture 47, Social media post of volunteer (LinkedIn)

4.3 Speakers

The speakers were before the event a bit sceptical of the stage size, though this was not uttered in words the silence when seeing the stage under construction had a message to deliver. The speakers have however expressed their gratitude and thankfulness both in in person and through mail and social media.



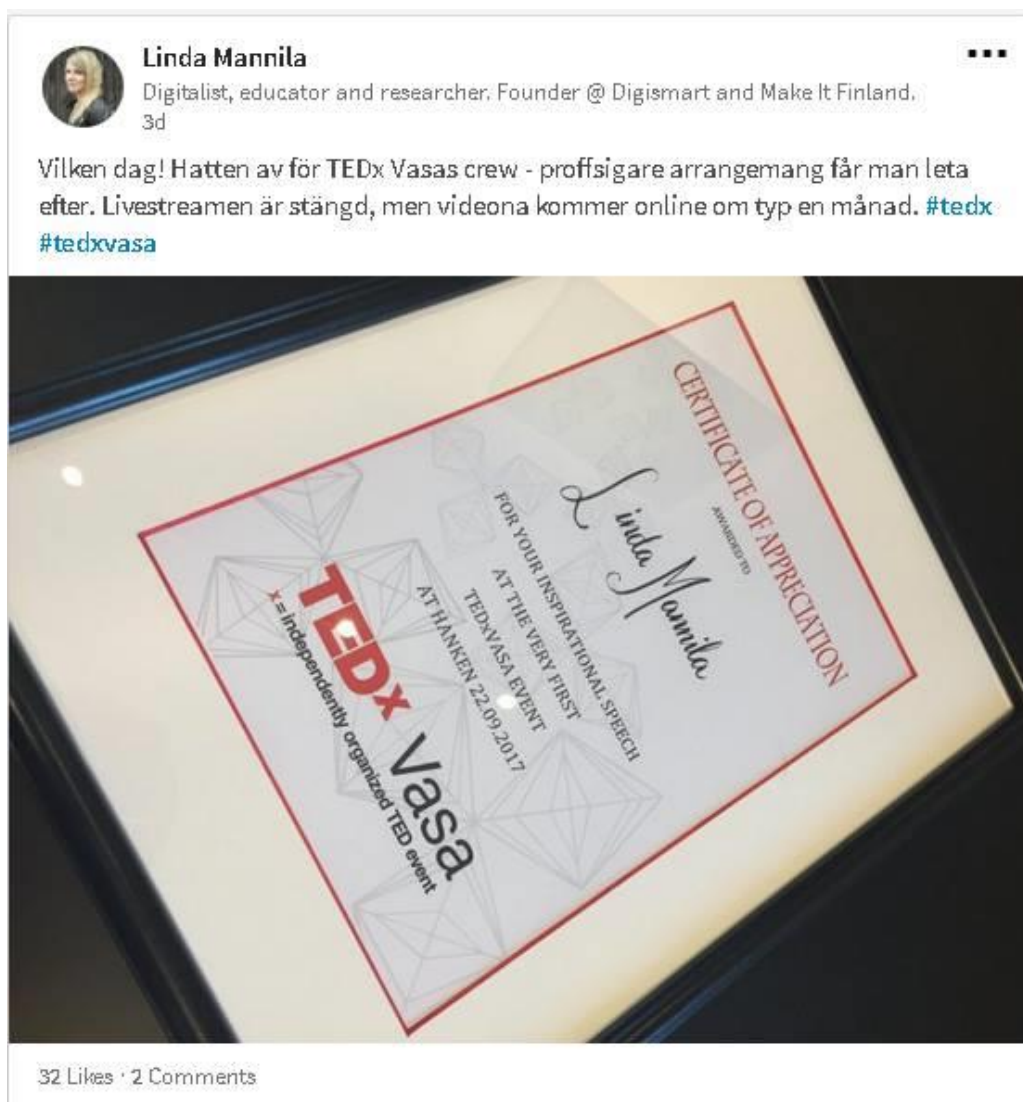
Picture 48, Social media post (Samuli Torssonen, Facebook)



Picture 49, Social media post (Antoni Lacinai, LinkedIn)



Picture 50, Social media post (Marco Ryan, LinkedIn)



Picture 51, Social media post (Linda Mannila, Facebook)

4.4 My own experience

When looking at the final event results and what we achieved, I can for my part only be happy with the results achieved. Apart from the measurable results there are also the soft values or experiences that naturally are more difficult to quantify. On my part one of the unexpected gains was the work of getting sponsors to sign up and the entire process from initial multiple failures to the final success of getting the required amount to achieve the set goals of the event.

The managing of the volunteers and opportunity to learn and refine these skills was invaluable as I had the opportunity to come in close and personal contact with many diverse backgrounds as well as ethnical groups. In contrast to my previous managing that was with employees, the opportunity to delegate tasks I now had the opportunity inspire and ask people to do tasks and provide the goals. This part includes both success and failures that resulted in lessons learned. These lessons could, due to the long duration of the project, also usually be retried again later to evaluate what approach works best with different volunteers.

During the project I also had a good opportunity to get to know myself a bit more. I had initially planned to be the event moderator and introduce the speakers on the livestream. When somebody at a late stage proposed to find a moderator unknowing that I had goal set on this task, and that this small fact had been decided in the early stages of the project. This of course did not make me happy initially, but after some brainstorming during the meeting we ended up coming up with a moderator that was far superior in many ways. What I learned here, was that for this task where I had myself as the executor, I completely stopped considering any other alternatives or if there was anyone else who could be more competent or experienced for this task.

5. CONCLUSION and own thoughts.

This journey, as cliché as it sounds was a very long one. From the simple start of just toying with the idea of organizing a TEDx to spending countless weeks in organizing the numerous small and large details of the event.

Some numbers can perhaps give some insight into the amount of work required.

- The planning phase took 8 months
- Over 25 planning meetings
- Over 10 lunch meetings with sponsors and other parties.
- 6 speakers letters, 2 sponsors letters, 2 visitors letters
- 20 sponsors of the event, over 40 approached for sponsorship
- 15 volunteers in TEDxVasa crew
- Average volunteer work input estimated to be around one work month.
- 10 people from the video and streaming sponsor involved
- Countless hours spent on the phone with the speakers keeping them up to date.
- Two full weeks on during the 2017 summer just spent on organizing.
- 8 separate locations viewed for the event.
- Event was had three other locations where it was streamed live.
- Setting up a legal entity "TEDxVasa Samordnare rf"
- 4 newspaper articles
- 1 radio interview
- 0 (zero) written contracts made, a word is a promise.

Needless to say, this effort could never have been done without a team effort. I am therefore very thankful to all who contributed to making TEDx the success it was. The strategy chosen early on was to have all parties involved in how the work is progressing, the way it could and should be done and that all could make suggestions and provide input to the final outcome of the event. This proved to provide a very broad amount of different views and ideas and in the end resulted in us having good things in the event that one single person could not have by him/herself otherwise come to think about.

I am not going to say that things always “smooth sailing”, there were several disagreements and differing opinions during the work that sometimes even threatened to stop the event entirely. This can be said for the sponsors, speakers and also volunteers. But conflict resolving, and management is not the topic of discussion here, but highly recommended as “further reading” for anybody planning to organize a big event.

In this work I made the choice not to go into the process of setting up the legal entity TEDxVasa Samordnare Rf as this process is dependent on the legislation in Finland. The TEDx rules also change a bit over time and was only briefly touched upon. A big tip for going down this path is to have a written “code of conduct” or guidelines for each volunteer to agree to. This would just state how meetings are conducted and what kind of effort and involvement is expected from each volunteer.

Within the scope of TEDxVasa much of the motivation was through autonomous motivation whereas the volunteers did the task of their own choice and will and reaching the goals of the task further added to their motivation and eagerness to do the work. The volunteers themselves where both of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation whereas some the intrinsically motivated where intrigued of the thought of being a part of creating a TEDx. The extrinsically motivated people of the volunteers who were more set on the actual event and its results, for these people attending meetings and doing tasks not directly related and visible on the event was not the top priority.

On the last two days before the event, there was a need to switch to a management form that was more controlled than autonomous as some tasks were behind schedule and could not be risked to “work themselves out autonomously”. The consequence of not reaching the goal was here the leadership and management style chosen because “it had to be done”. The controlled motivation style allowed the volunteers involved with that task to complete it but by looking for short sighted goals by sacrificing some final quality.

Leading volunteers have many similarities with “corporate leadership” and many theories and work surrounding this can be used and applied when managing volunteers. It is however important to remember that with volunteers, you can’t really delegate tasks! You can only ask if somebody wants or is willing to do it. In a

corporate management or leadership work can be expected to be performed within a certain pay-grade or by a certain person who is trained to do it. With volunteering you may find the “best and most logical” person for a task may refuse or, say not be willing to do it. In this case the second-best thing to is to ask if the most experienced is willing to supervise the task to be done.

Decision making also is more of a group effort as this will help create a feeling that the goals and tasks are OUR and not someone else’s, volunteers do not say “Just doing my job to get paid”, they are all doing the work for common and shared goals which constitute the rewards. To be able to reward the group keep the goals small and have many small goals instead to big goals that take a long time to reach.

It is my hope that this writing or parts of it can provide an insight into volunteer management. I have decided to include the ones that I have found most relevant to my experience. And also, a brief reference into the world of motivation theories. With regards to TEDx event organizing the things listed here are what we did. Each event is different and but many of the basic tasks to do are listed. This list will hopefully provide some answers and spark even more questions.

Suggestions for future research.

Asking instead of delegating, what effect would volunteer management have in a corporate environment on productivity and job satisfaction. Can it even be implemented?

6. REFERENCES

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A choice blend What volunteers want from organisation and management

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Self-Determination Theory in Work Organizations: The state of a Science

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ATTACHMENT 1: QUESTIONNAIRE AND EVENT FEEDBACK

TEDxVasa-

2017, Event Date: 22 September,  2017

49 responses (42 promoters, 6 passives, 1 detractor)



- 10

....@....

Oct 8, 2017 – 3:55 p
- 9

....@....

Oct 5, 2017 – 5:58 a

It was a very interesting happening. I did not really know what to expect but found it inspiring. I also met some people for a long long time not having met and also some new interesting contacts.
- 9

....@....

Sep 27, 2017 – 1:15 p

Good Happening. Great atmosphere. Nicely organized.
- 10

....@....

Sep 27, 2017 – 8:58 a
- 8

....@....

Sep 27, 2017 – 6:01 a

10

....@....

Sep 26, 2017 – 2:13 p

9

....@....

Sep 26, 2017 – 8:42 a

The organization of the event was very good, good opportunities for networking also. Out of the ten speakers, eight were excellent, one was sort of OK but a bit boring and one was a classroom example on how someone actually knows about a topic, but has no skills on delivering his message.

9

....@....

Sep 26, 2017 – 7:59 a

7

....@....

Sep 26, 2017 – 7:39 a

10

....@....

Sep 26, 2017 – 3:01 a

9

....@....

Sep 26, 2017 – 3:01 a

....@....

Sep 26, 2017 – 2:42 a

Great organization of the event! Great venue! Great speakers! Great people involved! Great opportunity to meet both speakers and fellow audience between speaking sessions! Never a dull moment!

9

....@....

Sep 26, 2017 – 2:29 a

Amazing good. :)

9

....@....

Sep 26, 2017 – 2:23 a

10

....@....

Sep 26, 2017 – 1:40 a

Very well organized and interesting speakers.

10

....@....

Sep 26, 2017 – 1:37 a

nice arrangement

10

....@....

Sep 26, 2017 – 1:30 a

Excellent event!

8

....@....

Sep 26, 2017 – 1:27 a

Long day but still a lot of fun.

10

....@....

Sep 26, 2017 – 1:22 a

It was a great experience. I did expect a little better talks from a couple of the speakers, but my overall impression was very good.

10

....@....

Sep 26, 2017 – 1:21 a

It was an excellent event; a good spread of topics presented, very professionally run and a great opportunity to meet new and interesting people.

9

....@....

Sep 26, 2017 – 12:27 a

Most of the speakers were quite good, event was well organised (expect lack of trash bins in the cafeteria) and the communication throughout and prior to the event was good.

9

....@....

Sep 25, 2017 – 5:51 p

Invigorating event; great speakers, interesting stories, enthusiastic audience.

....@....

Sep 25, 2017 – 4:57 p

10

....@....

Sep 25, 2017 – 4:39 p

Interesting social and informative day... and I do like TED and TEDx in general a lot! Well done!

10

....@....

Sep 25, 2017 – 3:28 p

I enjoyed the atmosphere and speakers were really good. Volunteers made really good work!

10

....@....

Sep 25, 2017 – 3:20 p

10

....@....

Sep 25, 2017 – 3:10 p

8

....@....

Sep 25, 2017 – 3:05 p

Interesting and surprising topics

10

....@....

Sep 25, 2017 – 2:30 p

9

....@....

Sep 25, 2017 — 2:28

10

....@....

Sep 25, 2017 — 2:18

Very interesting and inspiring speakers and subjects. Great opportunity to meet contacts.

0

....@....

Sep 25, 2017 — 2:08

Not well organized, bad selection of speakers. Only the last speaker was like a typical TEDx speaker.

10

....@....

Sep 25, 2017 — 2:08

It was a very well organized event with a professional crew. The audience got good food and drinks and was well taken care of. Interesting speakers and most of them brought a different angle on the same related theme. At the end of the day when it was time to leave, you did so with a smile on your face.

9

....@....

Sep 25, 2017 — 2:08

10

....@....

Sep 25, 2017 — 2:07

....@....

Sep 25, 2017 – 2:07 p

Excellent in event! 10+

10

....@....

Sep 25, 2017 – 1:44 p

10

....@....

Sep 25, 2017 – 1:43 p

The event was organised very good and the speakers did a fantastic job. My impression of the event is very positive.

9

....@....

Sep 25, 2017 – 1:29 p

The event was professionally arranged. Half of the speakers were very interesting.

10

....@....

Sep 25, 2017 – 1:28 p

Very nice atmosphere, good speakers. A selection of topics that were contemporary.

10

....@....

Sep 25, 2017 – 1:27 p

9

....@....

Sep 25, 2017 – 1:26 p

Excellent talkers and we got new business friends and closed a deal with a new customer acting i Vaasa and globally

9

....@....

Sep 25, 2017 – 1:21 p

Very well organized and interesting

10

....@....

Sep 25, 2017 – 1:21 p

9

....@....

Sep 25, 2017 – 1:20 p

10

....@....

Sep 25, 2017 – 1:19 p

Tedx is a wonderful way to exchange ideas and talk future job opportunities.

8

....@....

Sep 25, 2017 – 1:13 p

8

....@....

Sep 25, 2017 – 1:06 p

....@....

Sep 25, 2017 – 1:05 p

TED^x Vasa

x = independently organized TED event

WELCOME TO THE FIRST EVER TEDxVASA EVENT!

12:00 WARM-UP
12:15 TEDx VIDEO
12:17 SPEAKERS PRESENTATION
12:27 SUSANNA KULTALAHTI
12:52 RUNE WESTERGÅRD
13:17 MARCO RYAN
13:42 BREAK WITH TEDx VIDEO
14:12 MICHAEL WIDENIUS
14:37 LINDA MANNILA
15:02 ULF JOHANSSON
15:27 BREAK WITH TEDx VIDEO
16:32 SEBASTIAN "KEBU" TEIR
16:57 SAMULI TORSSONEN
17:22 MIA LILJEBERG
17:47 ANTONI LACINAI
18:12 OVER AND OUT
18:17 POST-MINGLE

**HANKEN,
VASA
22.09.2017**



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